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UNDERSTANDING BIRD FLU

What is bird flu?

Bird flu is an influenza virus that affects birds. H5N1 is a type of bird flu virus that spreads easily among birds. Bird flu is also called avian influenza or avian flu.

What is the difference between bird flu and pandemic flu?

Bird flu mainly infects birds, and very rarely infects humans. Pandemic flu is a flu virus that is new to humans, spreads easily from person to person, and causes serious illness and death around the world. While pandemic flu doesn't have to come from bird flu, bird flu could turn into a virus that spreads easily among people and, therefore, become a pandemic flu virus.

How does bird flu spread to humans?

Bird flu spreads to humans when humans have close contact with an infected bird, its blood, or its feces.

What types of birds can spread the flu?

Wild birds such as ducks, shorebirds, gulls, and geese carry the virus naturally and may not show signs of illness. They can pass the virus to domestic birds, such as chickens, which can then continue to spread the virus to other birds. In rare cases, birds can spread the virus to people through close contact.

What should people do if they have been exposed to bird flu?

If you think you have been exposed to bird flu and have a fever, difficulty breathing, cough, or other illness, get medical attention. Limit your contact with others.

If my pet picks up a bird that dies from bird flu, could my pet get bird flu?

There have been cases of dogs and cats getting bird flu, but the risk of a pet becoming infected with bird flu is very low. It is a good idea to keep your pets away from all wild and domestics birds.

What should I do if I find a dead bird?

Report dead birds to your local animal control agency or call the Dead Bird Reporting Hotline at 1-800-433-1610. Do not touch the dead bird with your bare hands.

Can mosquitoes spread bird flu?

Mosquitoes do not spread bird flu.